

**REMARKS**

Claims 12, 13, 15-20, 22-26, 28-31 and 33-38, 40, 41 and 43-46 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 12, 13, 15, 18, 22, 28, 33 and 38 are amended, and claim 32 is canceled. Support for amendments to claims 12, 15, 18, 22, 28 and 38 can be found, at least, in Figs. 1 and 2 and the corresponding description in the specification, for example, paragraph [0105]. Claims 13 and 33 are amended for form. Thus, no new matter is added.

**I. Claim Objections**

Claims 12, 13, 15-20, 22-26, 28-38, 40, 41 and 43-46 are objected to because of informalities. The objection is respectfully traversed.

The Office Action asserts that contrary to the language recited in the claims, "the supply device and the developing agent carrier are inside the container and are not disposed below the container" (see Office Action, page 2, item 1). This assertion is respectfully traversed.

Fig. 1 of the current application shows that the toner chamber 31, which corresponds to the developing agent container, is above the supply roller 32 and the developing roller 33. Further, the specification of the current application, at paragraphs [0032] - [0035], states that a first wall, which covers the upper portion of the supply roller, is disposed between the toner chamber and the supply roller. Therefore, contrary to the Office Action's assertion, the supply roller is not inside the toner chamber, and the supply device and the developing agent carrier are below the developing agent container, as recited in the independent claims.

The Office Action also asserts that contrary to the language recited in the claims, "the first wall is disposed within the developing agent container and cannot be between the container and the supply device," (see Office Action, page 2, item 1). This assertion is also respectfully traversed.

Fig. 1 of the current application shows a supply roller upper wall portion 38, which functions as a part of the first wall, between the toner chamber and the supply roller (see specification, paragraphs [0033] and [0034]). The specification of the current application, at paragraph [0034], states that "the supply roller upper wall portion 38 and the supply roller inclined wall portion 39 are provided between the toner chamber 31 and the supply roller 32 as to cover the supply roller 32 from above." Therefore, contrary to the Office Action's assertion, the first wall is disposed between the developing agent container and the supply device, as recited in the independent claims.

For at least the reasons discussed above, claims 12, 13, 15-20, 22-26, 28-38, 40, 41 and 43-46 satisfy all formal requirements. Withdrawal of the objection to claims 12, 13, 15-20, 22-26, 28-38, 40, 41 and 43-46 is respectfully requested.

**II. 35 U.S.C. §102(b) Rejection of Claims 12, 13, 15, 18-20, 22, 23, 25, 26, 28-34, 37, 38, 40, 41 and 43-46 Over Goto**

The Office Action rejects claims 12, 13, 15, 18-20, 22, 23, 25, 26, 28-34, 37, 38, 40, 41 and 43-46 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over JP 2001-272854 A to Goto et al. ("Goto"). The rejection of canceled claim 32 is moot, and the rejection of claims 12, 13, 15, 18-20, 22, 23, 25, 26, 28-31, 33, 34, 37, 38, 40, 41 and 43-46 is respectfully traversed.

Goto does not teach or suggest every feature of claims 12, 13, 15, 18-20, 22, 23, 25, 26, 28-31, 33, 34, 37, 38, 40, 41 and 43-46. Goto does not disclose a developing agent container and the supply device disposed below the developing agent container . . . and a second wall that is structured to guide the developing agent scraped from the developing agent carrier by the layer thickness regulating member to flow toward the developing agent container, as recited in independent claim 12, and as similarly recited in independent claims 15, 22, 28 and 38.

Goto does not disclose any structure that guides the developing agent to flow toward a developing agent container. Goto merely discloses that a toner storing section 11 and a toner supply part 17 are separated by a diaphragm 16, and the opening 16a is used by the toner hold section 11 to supply the toner to the toner supply part 17 (see Goto, Figs. 2-11, paragraphs [0034]-[0044]). Goto does not disclose guiding any toner from the toner supply part 17 toward the toner storing section 11. According to Goto, the toner is supplied to the toner supply part 17 when a valve 18 is in an open position. However, when the valve 18 is in a closed position, the only opening 16a is closed (see Goto, paragraphs [0027] and [0030] and Fig. 5). Therefore, Goto does not teach or suggest a second wall that is structured to guide the developing agent scraped from the developing agent carrier by the layer thickness regulating member to flow toward the developing agent container, as recited in independent claim 12, and as similarly recited in independent claims 15, 22, 28 and 38.

For at least these reasons, independent claims 12, 15, 22, 28 and 38 are patentable over Goto. Further, claims 13, 18-20, 23, 25, 26, 29-31, 33, 34, 37, 40, 41 and 43-64, which variously depend from independent claims 12, 15, 22, 28 and 38, are also patentable over Goto for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to the independent claims, as well as for the additional features they recite. Withdrawal of the rejection is thus respectfully requested.

**III. 35 U.S.C. §102(b) Rejection of Claims 12, 13, 22, 23, 25 and 29-32 over Eun**

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Claims 12, 13, 22, 23, 25 and 29-32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0118374 to Eun et al. ("Eun"). The rejection of canceled claim 32 is moot, and the rejection of claims 12, 13, 22, 23, 25 and 29-31 is respectfully traversed.

Eun does not teach or suggest every feature of claims 12, 13, 22, 23, 25, and 29-31. Eun does not disclose a first wall that covers the entire portion of the supply device, as recited in amended independent claims 12; and does not disclose a first wall that is disposed between the developing agent container and the supply device and covers the entirety of an upper portion of the supply device, as recited in claim 22.

In Eun, only a portion of the supply roller 126 is covered by a protrusion of the wall (see Eun, Figs. 3-5). Thus, Eun does not disclose a first wall that covers the entire portion of the supply device, as recited in amended claim 12, and as similarly recited in independent claim 22.

For at least these reasons, independent claims 12 and 22 are patentable over Eun. Further, claims 13, 23, 25 and 29-31, which variously depend from independent claims 12 and 22, are also patentable over Eun for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to independent claims 12 and 22, as well as for the additional features they recite. Withdrawal of the rejection is thus respectfully requested.

**IV. 35 U.S.C. §103(a) Rejection of Claims 26, 36 and 41-43 Over Eun in View of Takaguchi**

Claims 26, 36 and 41-43 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Eun in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,137,796 to Takaguchi et al. ("Takaguchi"). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

As discussed above, Eun does not teach or suggest every feature of the independent claims 12 and 22. Takaguchi does not remedy the above-described deficiencies with respect to Eun. Takaguchi is cited by the Office Action for only its alleged teaching of a developing agent that has a packed bulk density (see Office Action, page 10, item 7). Claims 26, 36 and 41-43 variously depend from claims 12 and 22. Thus, claims 26, 36 and 41-43 are also patentable over Eun and Takaguchi for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to

independent claims, as well as for the additional features they recite. Withdrawal of the rejection is thus respectfully requested.

**V. 35 U.S.C. §103(a) Rejection of Claims 16, 17, 24 and 35 Over Goto in View of Ishii**

Claims 16, 17, 24 and 35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Goto in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,594,462 to Ishii et al. ("Ishii"). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

As discussed above, Goto does not teach or suggest every feature of the independent claims 15 and 22. Further, Ishii does not remedy the deficiencies discussed above with respect to Goto. Ishii is cited by the Office Action for only its alleged teaching of a developing device that includes substantial spherical particles (see Office Action, page 11, item 8). Claims 16, 17, 24 and 35 variously depend from claims 15 and 22. Thus, claims 16, 17, 24 and 35 are also patentable over Goto and Ishii, for at least the reasons discussed above, as well as for the additional features they recite. Withdrawal of the rejection is thus respectfully requested.

**VI. 35 U.S.C. §103(a) Rejection of Claims 16, 17, 24 and 35 Over Eun in View of Ishii**

Claims 16, 17, 24 and 35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Eun in view of Ishii. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

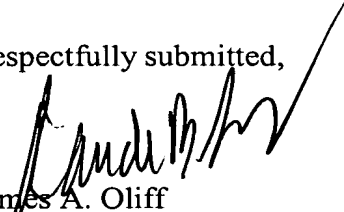
As discussed above, Eun does not teach or suggest every feature of the independent claims 15 and 22. Ishii does not remedy the deficiencies discussed above with respect to Eun. Ishii is cited by the Office Action for only its alleged teaching of a developing device that includes substantial spherical particles (see Office Action, page 12). Claims 16, 17, 24 and 35 variously depend from claims 15 and 22. Claims 16, 17, 24 and 35 are also patentable over Eun and Ishii for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to the independent claims, as well as for the additional features they recite. Withdrawal of the rejection is thus respectfully requested.

**VII. Conclusion**

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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JAO:PQW/wkb

Attachment:  
Petition for Extension of Time

Date: July 1, 2008

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